

Good morning, Committee Members-

I am a legislative attorney for Best Friends Animal Society, a national animal welfare organization. I am writing to express concern, and our **opposition** to the current version of SB 832. We understand that this bill will be the subject of a hearing before your committee on Wednesday, February 22.

The current language of SB 832 exposes potential community cat caregivers to criminal sanction for feeding free roaming cats that they may be caring for. The language prohibits the feeding of animals within the classification of "felidae" on lands not owned by the state. Not only would the criminal act be the feeding of the cats, but it would extend to the possibility of criminal sanction for feeding cats upon their own private property.

I am fairly certain in reading the remaining language of this bill, that the intent of the drafters was not to capture companion animals within the term of potentially dangerous animals, which fall under the feeding prohibition. We are not an organization to stand in the way to good-faith, common-sense legislation. However, the consequences of the language of this bill, whether intended or not, could be catastrophic for residents of Connecticut who care for community cats, and attempt to humanely manage their populations through trap-neuter-vaccinate-return (TNVR) programs. TNVR is the only method available to humanely manage and reduce community cat populations

As currently drafted, SB 832 is a violation of Connecticut residents' private property rights, and will unfairly punish good samaritans who seek to humanely reduce community cat populations through TNVR.

Best Friends respectfully requests that you OPPOSE SB 832 in its current form. Alternatively, a simple exemption from the provisions of this bills for domestic cats and dogs, traditional companion animals, would be an alternative that would bring more support for this proposed legislation, and avoid catastrophic consequences for residents and cats in the State of Connecticut. We would be happy to assist the committee and drafters in crafting language that would accomplish this goal. Thank you for your consideration.

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Legislative Attorney Cat Initiatives

Best Friends Animal Society

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